

FREE

First Communiqué
43 months and counting
A mouthpiece of CrimethInc. propaganda



Harbinger:

leaving the 20th century

Think about your direct bodily experience of life. No one can lie to you about that. What is your everyday existench like, from moment to moment? What are...

The Contents of Your Daily Life ...?

How many hours a day do you spend in front of a television screen? A computer screen? Behind an automobile windscreen?
All three screens combined?

What are you being screened from?

How much of your life comes at you through a screen, vicariously? Is watching things as exciting as doing things? Do you have enough time to do all the things that you want to? Do you have enough energy to? Why?

And how many hours a day do you sleep? How are you affected by standardized time, designed solely to synchronize your movements with those of millions of other people? How long do you ever go without knowing what time it is? Who or what controls your minutes and hours?

The minutes and hours that add up to your life?

Are you saving time? Saving it up for what?

Can you put a value on a beautiful day, when the birds are singing and people are walking around together? How many dollars an hour does it take to pay you to stay inside and sell things or file papers? What can you get later that will make up for this day of your life?

How are you affected by being in crowds, by being surrounded by anonymous masses?

Do you find yourself blocking your emotional responses to other human beings?

And who prepares your meals? Do you ever eat by yourself? Do you ever eat standing up? How much do you know about what you eat and where it comes from? How much do you trust it?

What are we deprived of by labor-saving devices? By thought-saving devices? How are you affected by the requirements of efficiency, which place value on the product rather than the process, on the future rather than the present, the present moment that is getting shorter and shorter as we speed faster and faster into the future? What are we speeding towards?

lifesabor

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How are you affected by being moved around in prescribed paths, in elevators, buses, subways, escalators, on highways and sidewalks? By moving, working, and living in two- and three-dimensional grids? How are you affected by being organized, immobilized, and scheduled rather than wandering, roaming freely and spontaneously? Scavenging? (Shoplifting?)

How much freedom of movement do you have--freedom to move through space, to move as far as you want, in new and unexplored directions?

And how are you affected by waiting? Waiting in line, waiting in traffic, waiting to eat, waiting for the bus, waiting to urinate--learning to punish and ignore your spontaneous urges?

How are you affected by holding back your desires?

By sexual repression, by the delay or denial of pleasure, starting in childhood, along with the suppression of everything in you that is spontaneous, everything that evidences your wild nature, your membership in the animal kingdom?

Is pleasure dangerous? Could danger be joyous?

Do you ever need to see the sky? (Can you see many stars in it any more?) Do you ever need to see water, leaves, foliage, animals? Glinting, glimmering, moving?

Is that why you have a pet, an aquarium, houseplants? Or are television and video your glinting, glimmering, moving?

How much of your life comes at you through a screen, vicariously?

If your life was made into a movie, would you watch it?

How do you feel in situations of enforced passivity?

How are you affected by a non-stop assault of symbolic communication--audio, visual, print, billboard, video, radio, robotic voices--as you wander through a forest of signs? What are they urging upon you?

lifeboxed

waiting for the bus

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Do you ever need solitude, quiet, contemplation? Do you remember it? Thinking on your own, rather than reacting to stimuli? Is it hard to look away?

Is looking away the very thing that is not permitted?

Where can you go to find silence and solitude? Not white noise, but pure silence? Not loneliness, but gentle solitude?

How often have you stopped to ask yourself questions like these?

Do you find yourself committing acts of symbolic violence?

Do you ever feel lonely in a way that words cannot even express?

**Do you sometimes feel yourself ready to
lose control?**

The 20th Century has marked the end of the millennium that saw the world become colonized by and organized under Western civilization, that saw the industrial revolution and overpopulation restructure both humanity and the very surface of the earth itself. This century began with fifty years of alternating slaughter, starvation, and rabid nationalism such as the human race had never seen before. It is concluding with an ominous silence among young people in the United States and much of Europe, for with the end of the "Cold War" the idea that there really is any alternative at all to our modern living conditions and society is becoming hard to conceive of; and in the meantime, we are becoming more and more organized and arranged by the technological systems that we set up with the supposed intentions of making our lives more free and meaningful.

As this century is ending with sentimental retrospectives and the like, what we really must do is not look back but look ahead. Now more than ever we must consider whether our modern lives as we have come to live them over the last thousand years really satisfy all our needs and desires as human beings, and prepare for the new millennium to be a new chapter in the human experiment. We must use the lessons we have learned from the 20th Century to plan for a new era in which human life can be meaningful and fulfilling, even thrilling, heroic. Or have we learned any lessons?

Don't wait for permission, for some far-off "world revolution," for later "when you have more time." **Demand joy, danger, passion in your life today!**



DESPAIR

Show

All natural

DESPAIR

100% Unnatural

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FAT-FREE

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DESPAIR

Coming soo

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100% FAT FREE

100% FAT FREE

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In a theatre near YOU

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Coming soon

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In a theatre near YOU

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Just Do It!

Despair

Coming to a Theatre near You

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100% Unnatural

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Coming to a Theatre near You
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In a theatre near You

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Abs... despair

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Just

Coming to a Theatre near You

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DESPAIR

Alive in the land of the dead. They eat
dead food with false teeth. Their buildings
have false fronts, their radio and
television stations broadcast dead air.
They kill time as spectators of false
images. Their corporations are guilty of
false advertising, and their employment
opportunities offer only murderous
mis-treatment, lethal boredom, and fatal
submission; they demand that you meet
deadlines, that you pitch tent in the death
camps. Does the dead end justify the
means? They inhabit dead cities and
make false moves, really going nowhere
at all, treading day after day the same
path of despair. Even their air is
conditioned. They ask you to give your
lives for their countries, for their religions,
for their economies, leaving you with only

WARNING SHOT

ABOUT THE PROBLEM

The poverty against which man has been struggling throughout history is not merely the poverty of material goods; the ennui and disorientation experienced by the members of the middle and upper classes in today's wealthy industrial nations has revealed the poverty of Western existench itself.

The problems that we face today cannot be traced to class conflict alone. It is not merely a question of the ruling class profiting at the expense of the proletariat, for we have seen that the profit that those with capital do make does not make their lives any more fulfilling. It does not matter whether a woman is buried alive in a prison, in a reform school, in a sweatshop, in a ghetto, in a prestigious university, in a condominium bought on credit, or in a mansion with a private swimming pool and tennis courts, so long as she is buried alive. Everyone suffers from today's status quo, albeit differently; but whether a man is starving on his minimum wage salary, exhausted by his repetitive responsibilities at the office, or befuddled by the curious feeling of

emptiness that accompanies the undirected acquisition of material wealth, he has a stake in fighting for change. So we all, rich and poor, must band together to consider our situation and struggle to alter it.

This also means that there is no mythical "They." Innumerable radical movements and social critics have relied upon this concept to motivate people by stirring up hatred for the "evil orchestrators" of human suffering, the enemies who conspire against us. But this kind of thinking only serves to divide us against each other, and whether we are divided on class lines, on color lines, or according to any other categories, we are distracted from the important issues and impeded in our progress. Our true "enemy" is the social forces and patterns at work between ourselves, and it is these forces which we must come to understand and to struggle against.

This is not to say that there are not individuals whose behavior is particularly dangerous to their fellow human beings, insofar as it perpetuates or intensifies our present state of emergency. But even if these individuals do have negative intentions towards others, it is still unlikely that they possess a clear understanding of the extremely complicated conditions to which they are contributing.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

We individuals who are unsatisfied with their lives, who do feel the "poverty" of the existench that modern Western civilization has to offer, must seek out others who are experiencing similar symptoms. Together, we must construct and publicize an analysis of our situation: a theory of why human beings act and interact in the ways that they do today, and how this leads to our sensations of alienation, disorientation, and exhaustion.

This analysis must have effective action of some kind as its necessary and immediate consequence, or else (as have the theories of a long tradition of "radical" discussion groups) it will come to nothing. And this struggle presupposes participants who are fighting for themselves, to see and feel change and improvement in the course of their own lives--as we shall see.

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... Their system is organized by artificial

intelligence and provides only virtual

reality. Their culture will pin you down and

bore you to death, their lifestyle is lifeless,

their existench is a permanent deadlock.

Everything about them is dead and false.

The only thing that is unbearable is that

nothing is unbearable. When will we

demand more?

The struggle is for life, for real life.

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ABOUT THE SOLUTION

Whatever solution, whatever revolution', we propose, must be present-oriented rather than future-oriented if it is to be genuinely revolutionary.

The past and the present are both full of examples which indicate this. To consider one: Christianity demands of its followers that they delay gratification until they enter the next world, when they will supposedly be rewarded for their proper conduct; in doing so it assumes that this proper conduct is not fulfilling enough in itself to be worthwhile unless it is rewarded. This kind of thinking reflects a dire misunderstanding of the nature of human happiness; for happiness is to be found in activity, in activities that are exciting and satisfying in and of themselves, rather than in passively awaiting rewards for unsatisfying activities. Therefore it is not surprising that many devout Christians are bitter, spiteful individuals who jealously resent healthy activity and excitement in others--for they believe that they will find true happiness only in their "heavenly reward" for behavior that is not at all exciting for them, and thus must watch

movements and social critics have relied upon this concept to motivate people by stirring up hatred for the "evil orchestrators" of human suffering, the enemies who conspire against us. But this kind of thinking only serves to divide us against each other, and whether we are divided on class lines, on color lines, or according to any other categories, we are distracted from the important issues and impeded in our progress. Our true "enemy" is the social forces and patterns at work between ourselves, and it is these forces which we must come to understand and to struggle against.

This is not to say that there are not individuals whose behavior is particularly dangerous to their fellow human beings, insofar as it perpetuates or intensifies our present state of emergency. But even if these individuals do have negative intentions towards others, it is still unlikely that they possess a clear understanding of the extremely complicated conditions to which they are contributing.

This analysis must have effective action of some kind as its necessary and immediate consequence, or else (as have the theories of a long tradition of "radical" discussion groups) it will come to nothing. And this struggle presupposes participants who are fighting for themselves, to see and feel change and improvement in the course of their own lives--as we shall see.

Thus, a woman who cooks a recipe of her own invention for her friends may find a great deal of pleasure and meaning in this undertaking, while a man who slaves all day to cook exotic food in an expensive restaurant will find that the purchases he makes with his paycheck cannot compensate him for the days of his life he has given up. You can purchase a twenty acre estate, the latest in status-symbol automobiles, and an entire wardrobe of unique and exquisite fashions, but the pleasure that these possessions afford cannot compare to the exhilaration of spending a day freely pursuing your desires.

Accordingly, our revolution must be an immediate revolution in our daily lives; anything else is not a revolution but a demand that once again people do what they do not want to do and hope that this time, somehow, the compensation will be enough. Those who assume, often unconsciously, that it is impossible to achieve their own desires--and thus, that it is futile to fight for themselves--often end up fighting for an ideal or cause instead. But it is still possible to fight for ourselves, or at least the experiment must be worth a try; so it is crucial that we seek change not in the name of some doctrine or



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Fight foul, life is real!

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Traditional Marxism takes the Christian mistake one step further by asking its adherents to work towards a revolution they will probably never live to see--that is, in the Marxist "faith," gratification is delayed beyond the reach of human experience. It should be no surprise that today, beyond a little anachronistic romanticism about the "nobility" of self-sacrifice, the Marxist offer serves as little incentive for people to seriously fight for the "communist revolution." In contrast, today's capitalistic consumer market at least promises prompt gratification in the form of material goods (and the myths and images it associates with them) in return for the generally unsatisfying labor it requires. But--does it deliver true gratification to its participants?

Again, happiness is an active experience, not a passive sensation.

¹The word "revolution" may be amusing or off-putting to the modern reader, convinced as he is that effective resistance to the status quo is impossible and therefore not even worth considering. Gentle reader, we ask that you suspend your disbelief long enough to at least contemplate whether or not such a thing might be worthwhile if it were possible; and then that you suspend it further, long enough to recognize this disbelief for what it is--despair!

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not live to witness. In this way we will avoid the feelings of worthlessness and alienation that result from believing that it is necessary to "sacrifice oneself for the cause," and instead live to experience the fruits of our labors. . . in our labors themselves.

To put it another way, our revolution must be above all a revolution in the ways we live and think. It must be a recognition and rejection of the thought patterns and patterns of social interaction that have led us to today's unsatisfying existench, in favor of patterns of thought and interaction that will be satisfying in themselves. It must be a revolution in our motivations, replacing reward-motivated behavior with behavior that is intrinsically meaningful. It must be a revolution in our everyday lives. Rejecting boredom, exhaustion, and despair for excitement, danger, love, passion and compassion--that is a revolution worth fighting for! And certainly there are large scale, long term goals that we must fight for, to make this revolution possible for all of us in the years to come; but we should fight for these goals not out of servitude to a doctrine or cause, but because it is exciting and invigorating today to strive for difficult and worthy objectives.

The will to a system is the will to a lie

Of course, perhaps this sort of idealism will only serve to trick us, with the best of all possible intentions; into betraying the very ideals which we seek to promote. Perhaps we are sealing our own fate by transforming whatever genuine desires for change people may have into ultimately ineffectual activities such as purchasing "revolutionary products" and discussing the ideas of others rather than creating their own. Perhaps the only lead people to purchase the products advertised (and thus be forced to system), rather than just harmlessly raising the funds necessary to publish our

to the same ends; and these vegetables themselves were probably picked by migrant workers or other oppressed labor.

And at the same time, modern Western culture is so deeply ingrained in our minds, indoctrinated with it as we are from an early age, that it is practically impossible to avoid being influenced in our actions by the very assumptions and values which we are struggling against. After a lifetime of being taught to place a financial value on the hours of our lives, it is hard to stop feeling like one must be rewarded materially for an activity for it to be worthwhile. After a lifetime of being taught to respect hierarchies of authority, it is very difficult to suddenly interact with all human beings as equals. After a lifetime of being taught to associate happiness with passive spectatorship, it is hard to enjoy building furniture more than watching television. And of course there are ten thousand more subtle ways in which these values and assumptions manifest themselves in our thoughts and our actions.

This does not mean that resistance is futile. Indeed, if our choices today are so limited that we cannot act without replicating the conditions from which we were trying to escape, resistance is all the more crucial. This does mean that "innocence" is a myth, a counter-revolutionary concept which we must leave behind us with the rest of post-Christian thinking. The traditional Christian demand upon human beings is that they be innocent, that they keep their hands clean of any "sin." At the same time, "sin" is so difficult for the Christian to avoid (as counter-revolutionary activity is today, for us) that this demand leads to feelings of guilt and failure in the believer, and ultimately to despair, when he realizes that it is impossible for him to be "innocent" and "pure." In fact, by forbidding "sin," Christian doctrine makes it all the more tempting and intriguing for the believer; for whether the mind does or not, the human heart recognizes no authority and will always seek out that which is not permitted to it.

We must not make the same mistakes as Christianity. The demand that people be free from hypocrisy, free from any implication in the system, will result in the same effects as the Christian demand that people be free from sin: it will create frustration and despair in those who would seek change, and at the same time it will make hypocrisy all the more tempting. Rather than seek to have hands that are clean of implication in the systems we struggle against, we should aim to make the inevitable negative effects of our lives worthwhile by offering enough positive activity to more than balance the scales. This approach to the problem will save us from being immobilized by fear of hypocrisy or shame about our "guilt."

CrimethInc.

practical tips for CrimethInc. agents...

Steal.

The marketplace of ideas, like any marketplace, is fit only for looting.

I. "Intellectual Property"

We have all been taught from our youth that "there is nothing new under the sun." Whenever a child has an exciting idea, an older person is quick to point out either that this idea has been tried before and didn't work, or that someone else not only has already had the idea but also has developed and expounded upon it to greater lengths than the child ever could. "Learn and choose from the ideas and beliefs already in circulation, rather than seeking to develop and arrange your own," seems to be the message, and this message is sent clearly by the methods of "instruction" used in both public and private schools throughout the West.

Despite this common attitude, or perhaps because of it, we are very possessive of our ideas. The concept of "intellectual property" is ingrained in the collective psychesis much deeper than the concept of material property. Plenty of thinkers have appeared who have asserted that "property is theft" in regard to real estate and other physical capital, but few have dared to make similar statements about their own ideas. Even the most notoriously "radical" thinkers have still proudly claimed their ideas as, first and foremost, their ideas.

Consequently, little distinction is made between the thinkers and their thoughts. Students of philosophy will study the philosophy of Descartes, students of economics will study Marxism, students of art will study the paintings of Dali. At worst, the cult

Exhibit A: CrimethInc. itself... "insINC.ere"

The CrimethInc. collective is a perfect example of the difficulties a subversive organization will encounter in seeking to avoid hypocrisy, and of the liberating possibilities that embracing hypocrisy can create.

Harbinger exists to criticize such modern phenomena as advertising, which is fundamentally an effort on the part of modern businesses to influence people to purchase their products whether or not this is in their best interest. And yet CrimethInc. must sell advertising in the pages of Harbinger in order to finance its publication. Harbinger exists to warn against those who would sell ideologies that prescribe certain kinds of thinking and acting, whether or not these manners of thinking and acting are in the best interest of human beings. And yet, in order to compete with these forces, CrimethInc. too must sell an ideology of sorts: an ideology of "thinking for yourself," but an ideology all the same. Certainly we may claim that our products, our ideologies, really are in the best interest of human beings, but isn't that what every corporation and political party claims?

Thus it is impossible for us in CrimethInc. to pursue the goals we seek without simultaneously betraying those goals. Just as we strive to fight against the system, we replicate it. Selling "revolutionary" ideas is still selling ideas, and as long as buying and selling are taking place, nothing truly revolutionary is happening. Indeed the fact that "revolutionary" ideas are being used to perpetuate the status quo means that whatever resistance there might be is neutralized and assimilated from the start. On the other hand, activity is better than inactivity, and perhaps the efforts that we make here will still be able to have positive effects despite being necessarily compromised. And perhaps our willingness to point out where we are compromised will prevent those compromises from rendering our efforts useless. It might be possible to incite genuine to change in the lives of human beings, despite the implication inherent in any kind of activity today; and even if it is not, it must still be worth a try.

Of course, perhaps this sort of idealism will only serve to trick us, with the best of all possible intentions, into betraying the very ideals which we seek to promote. Perhaps we are sealing our own fate by transforming whatever genuine desires for change people may have into ultimately ineffectual activities such as purchasing "revolutionary products" and discussing the ideas of others rather than creating their own. Perhaps the advertising we sell in Harbinger will only lead people to purchase the products advertised (and thus be forced to remain trapped in the wage slavery system), rather than just harmlessly raising the funds necessary to publish our demand for the end of this system. Or maybe this hypocrisy is merely a cover that allows us to go about our business of revolution without appearing to be much of a threat, by making us appear to be another innocuous, pseudo-revolutionary group; perhaps we only appear to be hopelessly compromised so that the forces that have a stake in the status quo will not recognize the threat that we do pose until it is too late. And it might even be that CrimethInc. is actually orchestrated by those very forces, to lead those who do desire change astray into expending their efforts uselessly! Even then, it might have unforeseen effects. . . . Who can tell for sure?

The thing is to act, to act joyously, not to accept that we are helpless to effect change, even if we really are. For if we seek to resist the rules and lives set forward for us, if we fight a spirited fight against the forces that would keep us in despair, if we dare to act on our own and to act passionately and joyously, then that is in itself the revolution we seek.

Plagiarism

A CrimethInc. exclusive

we are led to believe that being creative and thinking critically are talents which only a few individuals possess, those of us who are not fortunate enough to be christened "artists" or "philosophers" by our communities will not make much effort to develop these abilities. Consequently we will be dependent upon others for many of our ideas, and will have to be content as spectators of the creative work of others—and we will feel alienated and unsatisfied.

Another incidental drawback of our association of ideas with specific individuals is that it promotes the acceptance of these ideas in their original form. The students who learn the philosophy of Descartes are encouraged to learn it in its orthodox form, rather than learning the parts which they find relevant to their own lives and interests and combining these parts with ideas from other sources. Out of deference to the original thinker, deified as he is in our tradition, his texts and theories are to be preserved as-is, without ever being put into new forms or contexts which might reveal new insights. Mummified as they are, many theories become completely irrelevant to modern existence, when they could have been given a new lease on life by being treated with a little less reverence.

So we can see that our acceptance of the tradition of "intellectual property" has negative effects upon our endeavors to think critically and learn from our artistic and philosophical heritage. What can we do to address this problem?

One of the possible solutions is plagiarism.

II. Plagiarism and the Modern Revolutionary

Plagiarism is an especially effective method of appropriating and reorganizing ideas, and as such it can be a useful tool for a young man or woman looking to encourage new and exciting thinking in others. And it is a

hypocrisy all the more tempting. Rather than seek to have hands that are clean of implication in the systems we struggle against, we should aim to make the inevitable negative effects of our lives worthwhile by offering enough positive activity to more than balance the scales. This approach to the problem will save us from being immobilized by fear of hypocrisy or shame about our "guilt."

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I. "Intellectual Property"

We have all been taught from our youth that "there is nothing new under the sun." Whenever a child has an exciting idea, an older person is quick to point out either that this idea has been tried before and didn't work, or that someone else not only has already had the idea but also has developed and expounded upon it to greater lengths than the child ever could. "Learn and choose from the ideas and beliefs already in circulation, rather than seeking to develop and arrange your own," seems to be the message, and this message is sent clearly by the methods of "instruction" used in both public and private schools throughout the West.

Despite this common attitude, or perhaps because of it, we are very possessive of our ideas. The concept of "intellectual property" is ingrained in the collective psychosis much deeper than the concept of material property. Plenty of thinkers have appeared who have asserted that "property is theft" in regard to real estate and other physical capital, but few have dared to make similar statements about their own ideas. Even the most notoriously "radical" thinkers have still proudly claimed their ideas as, first and foremost, their ideas.

Consequently, little distinction is made between the thinkers and their thoughts. Students of philosophy will study the philosophy of Descartes, students of economics will study Marx-ism, students of art will study the paintings of Dali. At worst, the cult of personality that develops around famous thinkers prevents any useful consideration of their ideas or artwork; hero-worshipping partisans will swear allegiance to a thinker and all his thoughts, while others who have same justified or unjustified abjection to the conceiver of the ideas will generally have a difficult time not being prejudiced against the ideas themselves. At best, this emphasis upon the "author-owner" in the consideration of propositions or artwork is merely irrelevant to the worth of the actual propositions or artwork, even if the stories about the individual in question are interesting and can encourage creative thinking by themselves.

The very assumptions behind the concept of "intellectual property" require more attention than we have given them. The factors that affect the words and deeds of an individual are many and varied, not the least of them being her social-cultural climate and the input of other individuals. To say that any idea has its sole origins in the being of one individual man or woman is to grossly oversimplify. But we are so accustomed to claiming items and objects for ourselves, and to being forced to accept similar claims from others, in the cutthroat competition to acquire and dominate (before we are acquired and dominated) that is life in a market economy, that it seems natural to do the same with ideas. Certainly there must be other ways of thinking about the origins and ownership of ideas that warrant consideration. . . for our present approach does more than merely distract from the ideas.

Our tradition of recognizing "intellectual property rights" is dangerous in that it results in the deification of the publicly recognized "thinker" and "artist" at the expense of everyone else. When ideas are always associated with proper names (and always the same proper names, in point of fact), this suggests that thinking and creating are special skills that belong to a select few individuals. For example, the glorification of the "artist" in our culture, which includes the stereotyping of artists as eccentric "visionaries" who exist at the edge (the "avant garde") of society, encourages people to believe that artists are significantly and fundamentally different from other human beings. Actually, anyone can be an artist, and everyone is, to some extent; being able to act creatively is a crucial element of human happiness. But when

expanding their efforts uselessly! Even better, it might have unforeseen effects. Who can tell for sure?

The thing is to act, to act joyously, not to accept that we are helpless to effect change, even if we really are. Far if we seek to resist the rules and lives set forward for us, if we fight a spirited fight against the forces that would keep us in despair, if we dare to act on our own and to act passionately and joyously, then that is in itself the revolution we seek.

we are led to believe that being creative and thinking critically are talents which only a few individuals possess, those of us who are not fortunate enough to be christened "artists" or "philosophers" by our communities will not make much effort to develop these abilities. Consequently we will be dependent upon others for many of our ideas, and will have to be content as spectators of the creative work of others—and we will feel alienated and unsatisfied.

Another incidental drawback of our association of ideas with specific individuals is that it promotes the acceptance of these ideas in their original form. The students who learn the philosophy of Descartes are encouraged to learn it in its orthodox form, rather than learning the parts which they find relevant to their own lives and interests and combining these parts with ideas from other sources. Out of deference to the original thinker, deified as he is in our tradition, his texts and theories are to be preserved as-is, without ever being put into new forms or contexts which might reveal new insights. Mummified as they are, many theories become completely irrelevant to modern existence, when they could have been given a new lease on life by being treated with a little less reverence.

So we can see that our acceptance of the tradition of "intellectual property" has negative effects upon our endeavors to think critically and learn from our artistic and philosophical heritage. What can we do to address this problem?

One of the possible solutions is plagiarism.

II. Plagiarism and the Modern Revolutionary

Plagiarism is an especially effective method of appropriating and reorganizing ideas, and as such it can be a useful tool for a young man or woman looking to encourage new and exciting thinking in others. And it is a method that is revolutionary in that it does not recognize "intellectual property" rights but rather strikes out against them and all of the negative effects that recognizing them can have.

Plagiarism focuses attention on content and away from incidental issues, by making the genuine origins of the material impossible to ascertain. Besides, as suggested above, it could be argued that the genuine origins of the contents of most inspirations and propositions are impossible to determine anyway. By signing a new name, or no name at all, to a text, the plagiarizer puts the material in an entirely new context, and this may generate new perspectives and new thinking about the subject that have not appeared before. Plagiarism also makes it possible to combine the best or most relevant parts of a number of texts, thus creating a new text with many of the virtues of the older ones—and some new virtues, as well, since the combination of material from different sources is bound to result in unforeseeable effects and might well result in the unlocking of hidden meanings or possibilities that have been dormant in the texts for years. Finally, above all, plagiarism is the reappropriation of ideas: when an individual plagiarizes a text which those who believe in intellectual property would have held "sacred," she denies that there is a difference in rank between herself and the thinker she takes from. She takes the thinker's ideas for herself, to express them as she sees fit, rather than treating the thinker as an authority whose work she is duty-bound to preserve as he intended. She denies, in fact, that there is a fundamental difference between the thinker and the rest of humanity, by appropriating the thinker's material as the property of humanity.

After all, a good idea should be available to everyone—should belong to everyone—if it really is a good idea. In a society organized with human happiness as the objective, copyright infringement laws and similar restrictions would not hinder the distribution and recombination of ideas. These impediments only make it more difficult for individuals who are looking for challenging and inspiring material to come upon it and share it with others.

So, if there truly is "nothing new under the sun," take them at their word, and act accordingly. Take what seems relevant to your life and your needs from the theories and doctrines prepared by those who came before you. Don't be afraid to reproduce word for word those texts which seem perfect to you, so you can share them with others who might also benefit from them. And at the same time, don't be afraid to plunder ideas from different sources and rearrange them in ways that you find more useful and exciting, more relevant to your own needs and experiences. Seek to create a personally constructed body of critical and creative thought, with elements gathered from as many sources as possible, rather than choosing from one of the prefabricated ideologies that are offered to you. After all, do we have ideas, or do they have us?

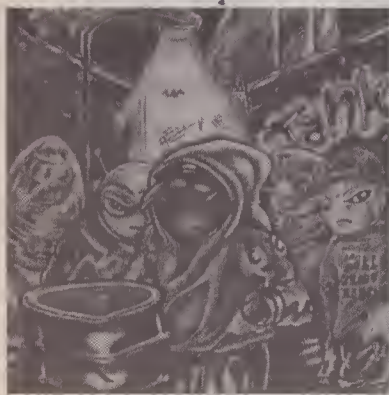
¹ This is actually a problematic assertion, since the judgment "theft is wrong" depends upon the assumption "respecting property is right."

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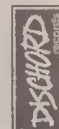
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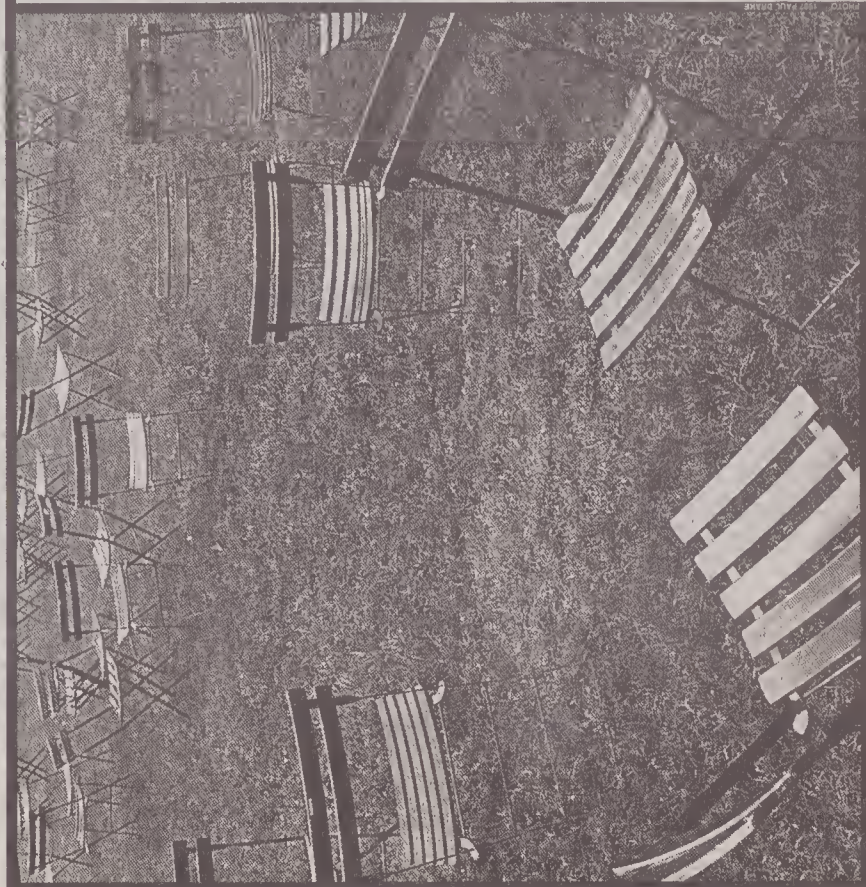
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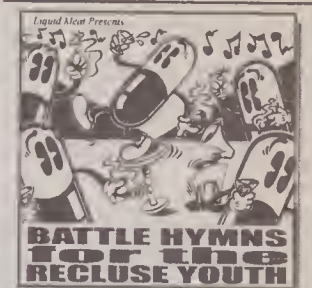


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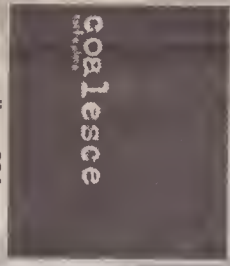
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Anti-Abortion policies
have nothing to
do with murder;
they have to do
with keeping
women in chains.



COLUMBUS DAY
A CELEBRATION
OF GENOCIDE

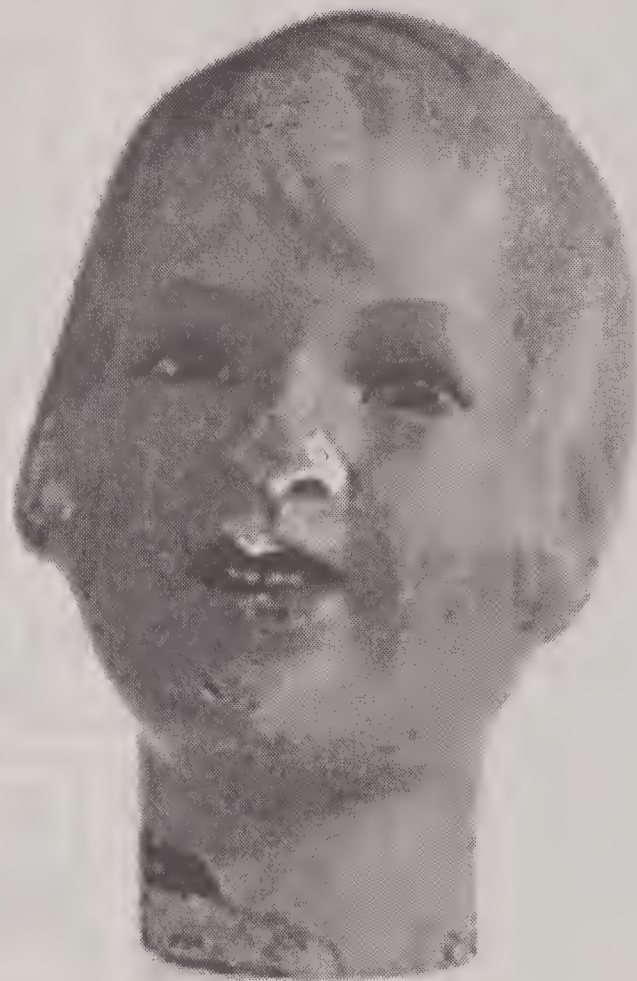
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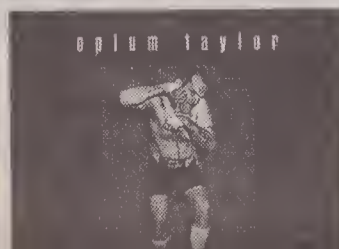
Hates ME

scare



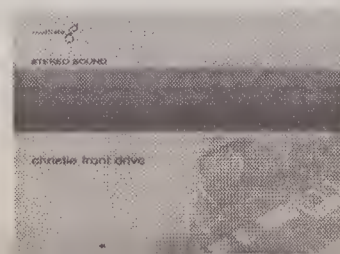


nothing clever. just music.



OPIUM TAYLOR

Fade Machine Fade Magazine LP/CD
Full length #2 from Opium Taylor shows that they have tuned into a sophisticated brand of weirdness developed since their debut. This



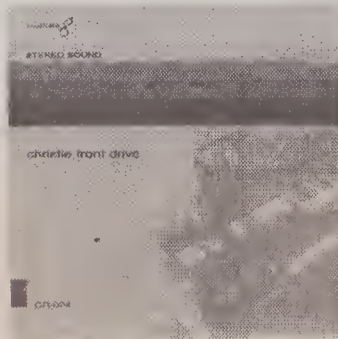
CHRISTIE FRONT DRIVE

The second full length from Christie Front Drive. It's been a long wait, but this is definitely worth it. CFD's now finely tuned

OPIUM TAYLOR
Fade Machine Fade Magazine LP/CD
 Full length #2 from Opium Taylor shows that they have tuned into a sophisticated brand of weirdness developed since their debut. This has influences of Lungfish and Sonic Youth as well as a tasteful New Wave element. Definitely NOT the same old thing!
 CR026 \$7/\$10



CHRISTIE FRONT DRIVE
 The second full length from Christie Front Drive. It's been a long wait, but this is definitely worth it. CFD's now finely tuned sound has been immaculately captured at Idful Recording. This record re-enforces all the reasons why this band was amazing.
 CR024 \$7/\$10



BROKEN HEARTS ARE BLUE
The Truth About Love LP/CD
 This is the debut recording from this Michigan quartet which features members of Ordination of Aaron, Vine and Current. Their recording was so intriguing that we couldn't just pick a song or two for a 7". Their sound? Imagine Seam mixed with the Smiths with just a touch of Rites of Spring. Totally original. Wonderful.
 CR025 \$7/\$10



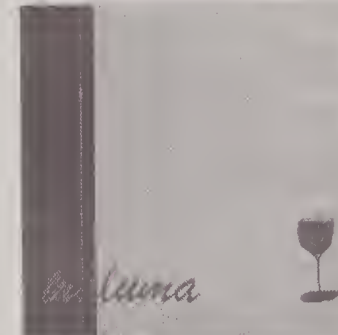
MINERAL
 February/M.D. 7"
 This 7" contains first songs by the band since their acclaimed LP. These new songs show Mineral growing into their own a bit more while still holding on to the intensity, melody and dynamics that have propelled their songs since their first 7".
 CR023 \$3



GIANTS CHAIR
"Purity and Control" LP/CD
 Giants Chair's sophomore full length "Purity and Control". With this release, Giants Chair experiment with poppier melodies, and cleaner sounds, but they keep close by the rhythmic power which they use with such potent results.
 CR022 \$7/\$10



TRALUMA 7"
 The debut 7" from this fine band from Chicago whose members' credits include Gauge, Radio Flyer, and Sweater Weather. Traluma has an edgy, noisy, and occasionally frantic sound, plus they put on a great live show.
 CR021 \$3



Other Caulfield Stuff:
 Christie Front Drive Vinyl Anthology CD \$8
 Giants Chair "Red and Clear" LP/CD \$7/\$10
 Sideshow "Lip Read Confusion" LP/CD \$7/\$10
 Mineral "Gloria" 7" \$3
 Opium Taylor "boy-white city" LP/CD \$7/\$10

SOONER:
 New Traluma 7"
 LATER:
 Traluma LP/CD
 Ethel Meserve 7"

Other Good Stuff:
 Sweater Weather/Days in December split 7" \$3
 Radio Flyer LP/CD
 Boys Life/Giants Chair split 7" \$3
 Christie Front Drive/Boys Life split 10" \$7
 Braid/Corn split 7" \$3
 Postmarked Stamps #3 7" (Giants Chair/Ethel Meserve) \$3
 Lullaby for the Working Class LP \$7
 "The Unheard Music" - A GREAT photo book, perfect bound, excellent printing, live and other shots of Christie Front Drive, Promise Ring, Fugazi, VSS and tons more! \$13

BROKEN HEARTS ARE BLUE*The Truth About Love LP/CD*

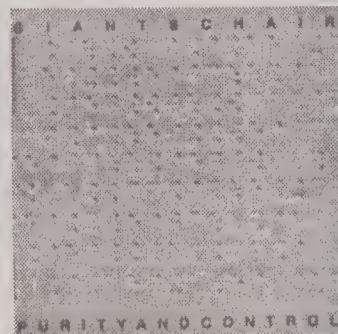
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Everyone knows how insipid and inane most television programs are. It's clear to anyone who spends an hour in front of prime time that the sitcoms, news, and commercials alike are deliberately designed to appeal to lowest common denominator levels of taste, intelligence, and attention span in the intended viewers. It has been a cliché for generations now that television is "mindless entertainment." However, most people don't really see this as any objection to watching television. It's not too hard to come to associate inanity and irrelevance with entertainment, to come to assume that "being entertained" means giving your critical and creative faculties a rest--how tiresome it is to be critical and creative, anyway! And in a society that seems intent on taking nothing seriously outside of the "professional world" of production, exchange of goods and services, and accumulation of wealth (witness our general disinterest in everything from Dante to date rape), it seems only natural that we spend our leisure time in the least constructive manner possible.

But the negative effects of watching too much television are much more complicated than they appear to be at first glance.

Our dependence upon television and other manifestations of the homogenized "mass media" to keep us entertained and (such as it is!) informed has economic, social, and, most importantly, personal ramifications for all of us. For our relationship with this media is one of spectator to spectacle, and life itself is less fulfilling for those who watch than it is for those who act.

This spectator/spectacle relationship is revealed by the godlike status of "stars" and other public figures in our society. The media depend partly upon the glamorization, even deification, of "personalities" such as Tom Cruise, Ice Cube or Nancy Reagan for the material they

we could be making better plans for our own lives or getting to know each other better, we instead spend our time exchanging useless information the media has pumped into our heads. And of course the more time we spend wondering who will be Rolling Stone's "band of the year" next, the less time we have to make more of our own lives.

There's a reason that things are this way.

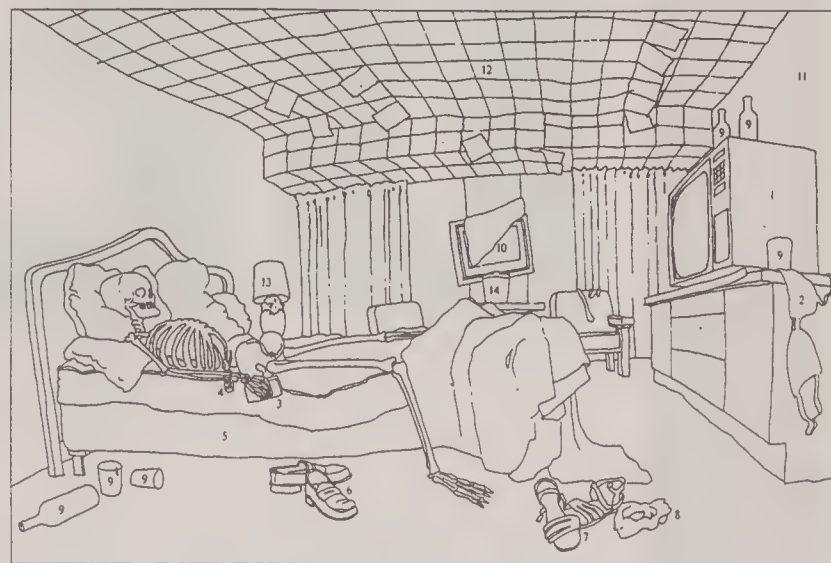
When television companies, movie producers, and their ilk convince us that entertaining, exciting life is not something that exists all around us every day but instead can only be found in the lives of celebrities, or in movies, they get to sell life itself back to us.

That is, when you spend your spare time watching television rather than traveling or falling in love or playing soccer, you come to believe that the most excitement you can have is in watching a travel show, a soap opera, or a sports game on television. And the more you watch these things on television, the more you forget that you could actually be out doing these things yourself rather than just watching them. You'd be surprised how much more exciting it is to actually make music yourself than to watch MTV--how much more fulfilling it is to make love yourself than to watch some strangers in a pornographic movie--how much more exhilarating it is to actually struggle against an obstacle yourself than to just watch an adventure movie. But the less often you leave the television set to actually do these things, the more empty your actual life is, and the more you need the television shows to make up for the lack of any real excitement in your life.

And that's where the media moguls come in. They're happy to provide you with a substitute life--at a price. Sure they'll sell you second-rate sex and violence, vicarious excitement and affection. . . but you have to

you finish work for the day that you don't have the energy to do anything but turn on the television. . . and you may even come to associate doing things with working, and thus with being exhausted and dissatisfied, and watching things with being "off the clock" and feeling "free." So you find yourself seeking meaning in life from watching the Superbowl rather than working on your own game.

And this would be hilarious if it wasn't so tragic: as



likely than not, the job you put all your effort into has something to do with the media or marketing industry. Maybe you work at an advertising agency, or a television station, or for some business that makes and markets a product that is completely useless to humanity, but that everyone buys because it is so heavily advertised (Coca Cola is a good example). So while you're getting burned out and missing out on real life, on visceral, intense, unmediated experience, just so you can buy a cheap substitute for it, you're supporting the

Revolution in Everyday Life—Reconsidering

TELEVISION

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Revolution in Everyday Life—Reconsidering **TELEVISION**

text by B. Diablo D.,
appropriated and rearranged by Nadia C.

*a look behind the 'scenes':
inside the mind of a serial killer*

collectively use to keep us watching. Certainly these people are not that much different from or more exciting than the rest of us--and the fact that so many of them can move from one role to another (from model to rock star, from rock star to actor, from actor to president of the United States) without anyone batting an eye is proof that it is their mere status as public figures, not their unusual talents in a given field, that make them "newsworthy." So much useless information about these individuals is spewed at us daily that one can't help but eventually pay attention. . . soon you know more about Madonna's new boyfriend than you know about your own neighbors. Perhaps you even begin to live vicariously through Madonna, as the media presents her as the

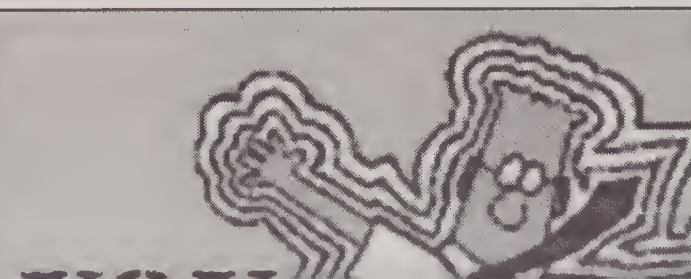
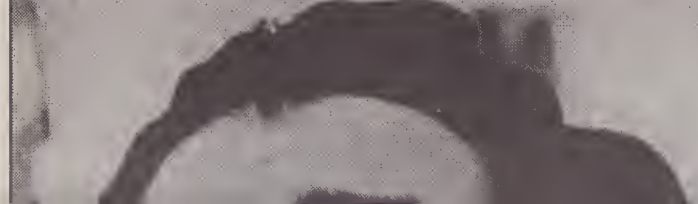
pay for it on pay-per-view or cable television, you have to pay to buy the television sets and the movie tickets and the computer modems, you have to buy the latest fashion or music magazine. Above all you have to listen to their commercials on the radio, read them in the magazines, or watch them in between television shows. These commercials are carefully engineered to get you to spend your money on the products being advertised. .

same system that is wasting your time until you die. And make no mistake about it, you are going to die--do you want to look back on a life of watching and talking about the Cosby Show, or a life of pain and pleasure, romance and struggle, love and hate?

Are you satisfied to watch other people do what you could be doing yourself, if you didn't waste so much time watching, didn't spend so much time working at a job you hate to buy things you don't need. . . to pay for more watching?

The solution is simple, if you want it: it's easy to turn off your television set and go outside. Stop caring what Elvis' daughter is doing, and start caring what your friends or enemies are doing, what your lover or stepmother is doing. Walk out of your office cell-block

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA



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The solution is simple, if you want it: it's easy to turn off your television set and go outside. Stop caring what Elvis' daughter is doing, and start caring what your friends or enemies are doing, what your lover or stepmother is doing. Walk out of your office cell-block into the sunshine and learn to do without those fancy clothes or brand new stereo so that you will be free to live a life of challenge and excitement, a life filled with new experiences--a life where you are the master of your own fate rather than just a victim of a dull job and a few sharp advertising campaigns. Surely if you used all that energy that you waste selling shoes or programming computers for your employer, you could find a rewarding way to earn enough money yourself to more than survive. . . or, better yet, you could work with others towards a world in which survival does not depend upon money.

Act now or forever hold your peace; don't talk about how bored you are, or how much you hate your job, or how amazingly meaningless your life seems (when and if you ever actually stop to think clearly about it) if you're not willing to try to set yourself free.

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

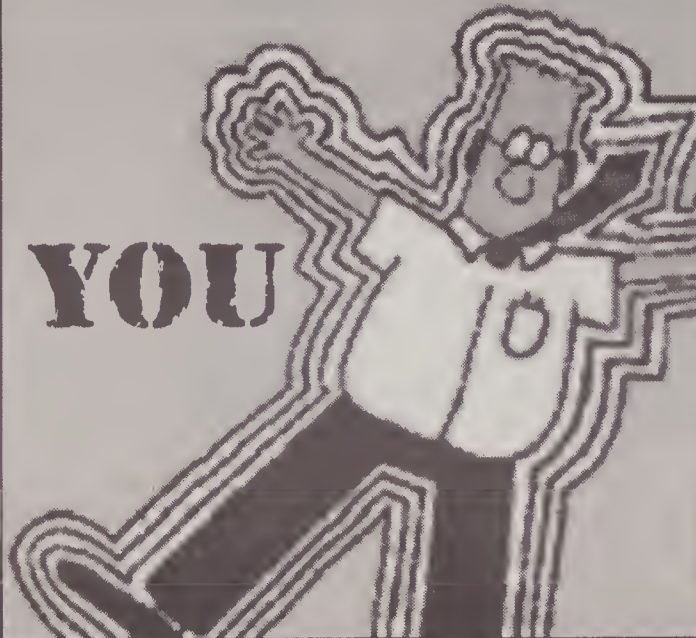


VISIONARY

personification of "feminine" charm and danger, as living a life vastly more interesting than your own.

Even worse, we soon know even more about fictional characters than we do about real people. Listen to people in their casual conversation and you'll hear how much time they waste talking about television shows, old movies, and comic book characters. When

YOU



TELEVISIONARY

. and when you do spend your money on them, you'll need to work harder and longer at your job to make more money. In fact chances are that your job isn't too rewarding to you either, and rather than making you feel so alive that you don't need television anymore your job probably makes watching television seem thrilling by comparison. Similarly, you may feel so exhausted when

Because we don't

know when we

will die, we get to

think of life as an

inexhaustible

well. But

everything

happens only a

certain number of

times, and a very

small number,

really. How many

more times will

you remember a

certain afternoon

of your childhood,

The Concealment Of DEATH

Here's an exercise to try at home. You will need a working stopwatch or similar timepiece that measures seconds. Before you begin, seat yourself in a comfortable chair and loosen your clothing.

Watch the second hand as it passes around the face of the clock. Picture the moment of your death, perhaps many decades in the future, or perhaps only a few years or months away (who can know?). Wait for the second hand to reach the starting point at the top of the clockface, and then watch as it records the passing of one minute of your life. Now imagine the clock counting down the minutes of your life to the moment of your death. Try this exercise picturing this moment a few decades in the future, then repeat it picturing the moment next year. Repeat it picturing the moment of your death next month. Next week. Tonight. After all, you never know.

Now observe the minute and hour hands on the clock. What were you doing at this time twenty four hours ago? Forty eight hours ago? One month ago? What will you be doing at this time in a week?

Imagine that the moment of your death is one month away. Consider--if you knew that this was true, what would you be doing right now? What would you be doing at this time tomorrow? Repeat this step, imagining your death to be one year away. Does this make very much difference in your thoughts about what you would do today and tomorrow if you knew the date of your death?

Compare your activities over the last twenty four hours to the activities you would have chosen if you had known that you would leave this world in one month or one year. Compare your activities over the last month, the last year, the last decade to those you would have chosen if you had known that on this day you would have only thirty days or twelve months left to live. How different would your life have been if you had known the date of your approaching death? Would you be ready to die in a month or a year, having lived the life that you have?

Chances are, at least as far as we all know, that most of the people who read this text and participate in this exercise will live for many more years or even decades afterwards. But still, look at the second hand of the stopwatch, and follow it as it records the passing minutes, counting down the minutes of your life that remain to you as they slip away. Are you living the life that you want to live? Are you living a life that, at any given moment, you could look back upon with satisfaction if you suddenly realized

seems limitless.

And yet it all

Perhaps twenty

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You watch the full

more times will

that. How many

perhaps not even

five times more.

Perhaps four or

life without it?

conceive of your

can't even

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If you find, looking back upon your life, that you have spent years living without any consideration of your mortality, this is really not unusual. For our social-cultural environment does not encourage us to think much about the limits that nature places on our lives. Death and aging are denied and hidden away as if they were shameful and embarrassing. The older members of our society are hidden away in "retirement homes" like lepers in leper colonies. The billboards, magazine photos, and television commercials that meet our eyes at every turn show only images of healthy men and women in the prime of life. Cemeteries, which once memorialized the dead and preserved a place for them in the thoughts of the living, are now forgotten in abandoned neighborhoods and overgrown with weeds. When a man dies, the rituals which once would have celebrated his life and brought the subject of human mortality to the thoughts of those who survived him are now often regarded as mere inconveniences. Death is impolite and embarrassing, it is considered bad etiquette, for there is no place for it in today's busy world of corporate mergers and record-breaking conspicuous consumption. Our busy schedules and glossy magazines neither make allowance for it nor offer any explanation of how it might be relevant to our value system or our lives.

And indeed if we were to stop and ponder the subject, perhaps we would find that when we seriously consider the limits of our time on this planet, keeping up with television comedies and having a good résumé seem less important than they did before. Our cultural silence about human mortality allows us to forget how much weight the individual moments of our lives carry, adding up as they do to our lives themselves. Thus we may squander countless hours watching television or balancing checkbooks, hours that in retrospect we might

have done better to have spent walking on the sea shore with our loved ones, cooking gourmet meals for our children or friends, writing fiction, or hitchhiking across South America. The reality of our future death is not easy for any of us to come to terms with, but surely it is better that we consider this now than regret not doing so later when it is too late.

Our modern denial of death has a deeper significance, beyond its functions as a reaction to our fear of mortality and a selective blindness that helps to preserve the status quo. It is a symptom of our ongoing struggle to escape from the cycles of change in nature and establish an unnatural permanence in the world. Our mortality is frightening evidence that we do not have control over everything, and as such we are quick to ignore it, if we cannot do away with it altogether--a feat our medical researchers are slowly working towards. It is worth questioning whether this would even be desirable.

Since the dawn of Western civilization, men and women have hungered for domination not only of the world and each other, but also for domination of the seasons, of time itself. We speak of the eternal grandeur of our gods and empires, and we design our cities and corporations to exist into infinity. We build monuments, skyscrapers, which we intend to stand forever as testimony to our victory over the sands of time. But this victory can only come at a price, at this price: that though nothing passes away, nothing comes to be, either--that the world we create is a static, standardized world that can hold no surprises for us any more. We would do well to be wary of fulfilling our own darkest dreams by creating such a dystopia, a frozen world in which no one must fear death any more, for everyone exists forever and no one lives for even an instant. —*Jane F. Humble*

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Despair



Falling in love is the ultimate act of revolution¹, of resistance to today's tedious, socially restrictive, culturally constrictive, humanly meaningless world.

Love transforms the world. Where the lover formerly felt boredom, he now feels passion. Where she once was complacent, she now is excited and compelled to self-asserting action. The world which once seemed empty and tiresome becomes filled with meaning, filled with risks and rewards, with majesty and danger. Life for the lover is a gift, an adventure with the highest possible stakes; every moment is memorable, heartbreaking in its fleeting beauty. When he falls in love, a man who once felt disoriented, alienated, and confused will know exactly what he wants. Suddenly his existence will make sense to him; suddenly it becomes valuable, even glorious and noble, to him. Burning passion is an antidote that will cure the worst cases of despair and resigned obedience.

Love makes it possible for individuals to connect to others in a meaningful way—it impels them to leave their shells and risk being honest and spontaneous together, to come to know each other in profound ways. Thus love makes it possible for them to care about each other genuinely, rather than at the end of the gun of Christian doctrine. But at the same time, it plucks the lover out of the routines of everyday life and separates her from other human beings. She will feel a million miles away from the herd of humanity, living as she is in a world entirely different from theirs.

In this sense love is subversive, because it poses a threat to the established order of our modern lives. The boring rituals of workday productivity and socialized etiquette will no longer mean anything to a man who has fallen in love, for there are more important forces guiding him than mere inertia and deference to tradition. Marketing strategies that depend upon apathy or insecurity to sell the products that keep the economy running as it does will have no effect upon him. Entertainment designed for passive consumption, which depends upon exhaustion or cynicism in the viewer, will not interest him.

There is no place for the passionate, romantic lover in today's world, business or private. For he can see that it might be more worthwhile to hitchhike to Alaska (or to sit in the park and watch the clouds sail by) with his sweetheart than to study for his calculus exam or sell real estate, and if he decides that it is, he will have the courage to do it rather than be tormented by unsatisfied longing. He knows that breaking into a cemetery and making love under the stars will make for a much more memorable night than watching television ever could. So love poses a threat to our consumer-driven economy, which depends upon consumption of (largely useless) products and the labor that this consumption necessitates to perpetuate itself.

Similarly, love poses a threat to our political system, for it is difficult to convince a man who has a lot to live for in his personal relationships to be willing to fight and die for an abstraction such as the state; for that matter, it may be difficult to convince him to even pay taxes. It poses a threat to cultures of all kinds, for when human beings are given wisdom and valor by true love they will not be held back by traditions or customs which are irrelevant to the feelings that guide them.



Join the Resistance: *Fall in Love*

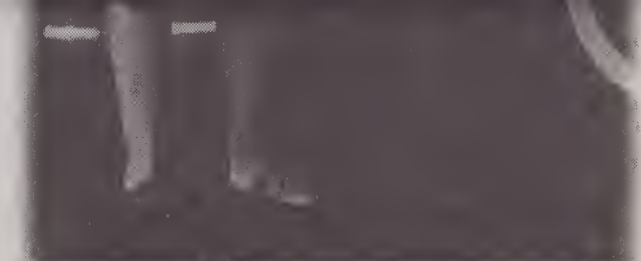
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by guest

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"The word 'revolution,' as it is used in the pages of Harbinger, is not a word for an armed uprising that is supposed to take place in some far-off future. We use the word to describe the moment when an individual succeeds in taking a life that was boring, unpleasant, and meaningless to him or her and making it fulfilling and worthwhile. It is a moment that could happen for any of us, at any time. Because we are mortal and will not live forever, rather than waiting for some promised 'day of liberation' we must strive to make life worthwhile for ourselves and each other in the present tense.

by guest

author

Gudrun

Ennslin,

dedicated

to Andreas

Baader

Love even poses a threat to our society itself. Passionate love is ignored and feared by the bourgeoisie, for it poses a great danger to the stability and pretense they covet. Love permits no lies, no falsehoods, not even any polite half-truths, but lays all emotions bare and reveals secrets which domesticated men and women cannot bear. You cannot lie with your emotional and sexual response; situations or ideas will excite or repel you whether you like it or not, whether it is polite or not, whether it is advisable or not. One cannot be a lover and a (dreadfully) responsible, (dreadfully) respectable member of today's society at the same time; for love will impel you to do things which are not "responsible" or "respectable." True love is irresponsible, irrepressible, rebellious, scornful of cowardice, dangerous to the lover and everyone around her, for it serves one master alone: the passion that makes the human heart beat faster. It disdains anything else, be it self-preservation, obedience, or shame. Love urges men and women to heroism, and to antiheroism—to indefensible acts that need no defense for the one who loves.

For the lover speaks a different moral and emotional language than the typical bourgeois man does. The overage bourgeois man has no overwhelming, smoldering desires. Sadly, all he knows is the silent despair that comes of spending his life pursuing goals set for him by his family, his educators, his employers, his nation, and his culture, without ever being able to even consider what needs and wants he might have of his own. Without the burning fire of desire to guide him, he has no criteria upon which to choose what is right and wrong for himself. Consequently he is forced to adopt some dogma or doctrine to direct him through his life. There are a wide variety of moralities to choose from in the marketplace of ideas, but which morality a man buys into is immaterial so long as he chooses one because he is at a loss otherwise as to what he should do with himself and his life. How many men and women, having never realized that they had the option to choose their own destinies, wonder through life in a dull haze thinking and acting in accordance with the laws that have been taught to them, merely because they no longer have any other idea of what to do? But the lover needs no prefabricated principles to direct her; her desires identify what is right and wrong for her, for her heart guides her through life. She sees beauty and meaning in the world, because her desires paint the world in these colors. She has no need for dogmas, for moral systems, for commandments and imperatives, for she knows what to do without instructions.

Thus she does indeed pose quite a threat to our society. What if everyone decided right and wrong for themselves, without any regard for conventional morality? What if everyone did whatever they wanted to, with the courage to face any consequences? What if everyone feared loveless, lifeless monotony more than they fear taking risks, more than they fear being hungry or cold or in danger? What if everyone set down their "responsibilities" and "common sense," and dared to pursue their wildest dreams, to set the stakes high and live each day as if it were the last? Think what a place the world would be! Certainly it would be different than it is now—and it is quite a truism that people from the "mainstream," the simultaneous keepers and victims of the status quo, fear change.

And so, despite the stereotyped images used in the media to sell toothpaste and honeymoon suites, genuine passionate love is discouraged in our culture. Being "carried away by your emotions" is frowned upon; instead we are raised to always be on our guard lest our hearts lead us astray. Rather than being encouraged to have the courage to face the consequences of risks taken in pursuit of our hearts' desires, we are encouraged to take risks at all to be "responsible." And love itself is

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We must fight against these cultural restraints that would cripple and smother our desires. For it is love that gives meaning to life, desire that makes it possible for us to make sense of our existence and find purpose in our lives. Without these, there is no way for us to determine how to live our lives, except to submit to some authority, to some god, master or doctrine that will tell us what to do and how to do it without ever giving us the satisfaction that self-determination does.

So fall in love today, with men, with women, with music, with ambition, with yourself. . . with life!

One might say that it is ridiculous to implore others to fall in love—one either falls in love or one does not, it is not a choice that can be made consciously. Emotions do not follow the instructions of the rational mind. But the environment in which we must live out our lives has a great influence on our emotions, and we can make rational decisions that will affect this environment. It should be possible to work to change an environment that is hostile to love into an environment that will encourage it. Our task must be to engineer our world so that it is a world in which people can and do fall in love, and thus to reconstitute human beings so that we will be ready for the "revolution" spoken of in these pages—so that we will be able to find meaning and happiness in our lives.

People from the (rapidly splintering) "mainstream" of society in Europe and the United States today take a peculiar pleasure in considering themselves "normal" in comparison to legal offenders, political radicals, and other members of social "outgroups." They treat this "normalcy" as if it is an indication of mental health and moral righteousness, regarding the "others" with a mixture of pity and disgust. But if we consult history, we can see that the conditions and patterns of human life have changed so much in the past two centuries that it is impossible to speak of any lifestyle available to human beings today as being "normal" in the natural sense, as being the lifestyle for which human beings have adapted over many generations. Of the lifestyles from which a young woman growing up in western civilization today can choose, none are anything like the ones for which our ancestors were prepared by centuries of natural selection and evolution.

It is more likely that the "normalcy" that these people hold so dear is rather the feelings of normalcy that result from conformity to a standard. Being surrounded by others who behave the same way, who are conditioned to the same routines and expectations, is comforting because it reinforces the idea that one is pursuing the right course: If a great many people make the same decisions and live according to the same customs, then these decisions and customs must be the right ones.

But the mere fact that a number of people live and act in a certain way does not make it any more likely that this way of living is the one that will bring them the most happiness. Besides, the lifestyles associated with the American and European mainstream were not exactly consciously chosen as the best possible ones by those who pursue them; rather, they came to be suddenly, as the results of technological and cultural upheavals. Once the peoples of Europe, the United States, and the world realize that there is nothing necessarily "normal" about their "normal life," they can begin to ask themselves the first and most important question of the next century:

Are there ways of thinking, acting, and living that might be more satisfying and exciting than the ways we think, act, and live today?



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